

Leptospirosis and Canine Influenza H3N2 Guidance for Pet Congregate Facilities in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health (VPH) is currently investigating and managing two outbreaks of disease in dogs: Leptospirosis and Canine Influenza (CIV) H3N2. Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that is zoonotic, meaning it can be transferred between animals and humans, generally through contaminated urine. CIV H3N2 is not zoonotic but is very contagious and spreads easily between dogs through the air or through secretions from coughing dogs. Both diseases can range from mild to severe illness in dogs and may even progress to death. Most cases in both outbreaks have been associated with congregate facilities (pet boarding, dog daycare, etc.) and are able to spread rapidly in these settings. Both diseases have a vaccine available that can offer significant protection to dogs and prevent further spread of disease.

Our ability to control these outbreaks depends very much on providing education and information to congregate facilities in Los Angeles County, as well as educating facilities, veterinarians, and pet owners about the need for vaccination before entering such facilities. The following are recommendations for congregate facility management amid these outbreaks.

VPH highly recommends requiring vaccination for both leptospirosis and canine influenza for dogs BEFORE entering the facility.

Both diseases are spread by dog-to-dog contact or contact with urine (leptospirosis) or respiratory secretions (CIV) from infected dogs. Particularly for CIV, dogs may shed or release the virus into the environment before symptoms of illness appear. Both outbreaks of disease will continue to spread rapidly and will not be stopped unless facilities **require** vaccination of dogs **before** entry. The vaccines available for leptospirosis and CIV are both safe and effective. Pet owners should consult with their veterinarian for vaccination. Generally, two doses of each vaccine are given 3-4 weeks apart and then boosted annually thereafter. Pets should wait two weeks after receiving the second dose of vaccine before entering a facility to allow for immunity to develop after receiving the vaccine.

With multiple confirmed cases of leptospirosis, VPH recommends closing to allow for deep cleaning and disinfection of the facility.

Leptospirosis is zoonotic meaning it can be transmitted from pets to people. The bacteria can infect people when their eyes, nose or mouth, or breaks in their skin are exposed to the urine of an infected animal, or to water or splashes of water contaminated with the urine of an infected animal. Deep cleaning and disinfection of the facility along with practicing good hand hygiene will significantly decrease the risk of both people and pets becoming ill. When cleaning a heavily contaminated environment, wear a mask, goggles, coveralls, and gloves. Do not pressure wash areas where animals have urinated as this may cause the bacteria to aerosolize and it can then be inhaled.

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Isolate sick pets or pets that are suspected to be sick immediately.

Send sick or pets suspected to be sick home or keep them in an area away from other pets and have them seen and tested by a veterinarian. If pets must be isolated on site, try to isolate them in an area that does not share airflow with healthy animals.

Screen pets upon entry for disease or possible exposure to disease.

Pets that are currently ill or have a recent history of being ill (cough, lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) should not enter the facility. These pets should be seen and tested by a veterinarian. Additionally, if a pet was recently exposed to one of these diseases at another boarding facility, they should quarantine before returning to boarding or daycare facility.

Send out prompt notifications and updates to clients if leptospirosis or CIV cases are confirmed in pets that have attended the facility.

Clients should be promptly notified when the facility learns of any confirmed or suspect cases in pets that were at the facility, so that they can learn about the diseases and know what symptoms to look for in their own pets. Please reference our webpages for both diseases to educate pet owners about how to protect their health as well as their pets' health. All communications should discuss vaccination against both diseases as the best way to prevent disease.

- Leptospirosis outbreak in dogs:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/Leptospirosis2021.htm>
- Canine influenza H3N2 outbreak:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/InfluenzaCanineH3N2.htm>

Report confirmed or suspect cases of either disease to VPH as they occur, using the appropriate reporting form.

- Leptospirosis reporting form:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/Forms/LeptospirosisReportForm.pdf>
- Influenza reporting form:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/Forms/InfluenzaAnimalForm.pdf>

Reporting cases is critical to the investigation and management of these outbreaks. VPH is also contacting pet owners to discuss the zoonotic potential of leptospirosis to protect human health. Completed report forms may be emailed to vet@ph.lacounty.gov or faxed to 213-481-2375.

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Follow the recommended isolation and/or quarantine measures for each disease before allowing pets to return to the facility.

- Leptospirosis – Dogs should have completed at least 14 days of antibiotic and be recovered from signs of illness before returning.
Canine Influenza – Dogs have been shown to still be contagious to other dogs for up to 28 days after becoming ill. This means that even a healthy and recovered dog can still be releasing the virus into the environment. Dogs with symptoms should remain at home for at least 28 days from when they became ill and be healthy before returning. Dogs that were exposed to sick dogs should be quarantined at home and monitored for signs of illness for 14 days before returning.

Practice good hygiene and biosecurity at the facility.

- Keep kennels clean, dry, disinfected and well ventilated
- When cleaning kennels, do not use forceful spray from a hose, as it may lead to droplets containing germs to move through the air
- Staff should wash hands frequently
- Use gloves when cleaning up urine, spray a disinfectant on the area, remove gloves and then wash hands well
- Do not share toys/food bowls/water bowls between dogs that are isolated or sick and dogs that are healthy
- Staff should wear gloves when handling isolated or sick dogs and wash hands afterward
- When cleaning a heavily contaminated environment, wear a mask, goggles, coveralls, and gloves that can be discarded or cleaned afterward
- If a person is experiencing symptoms of illness after exposure to a suspected or confirmed leptospirosis-infected dog, they should see their physician and discuss this exposure to guide human testing and treatment

You may contact Veterinary Public Health at 213-288-7060 or email [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:veter@ph.lacounty.gov) with questions. A veterinarian is available to speak with you or respond to your emails, Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm.

To view notifications that have been sent to veterinary practices regarding leptospirosis and CIV, please visit here: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/AHAN.htm>.